

Local TV Debate Centres on MUX Co. or No

Local TV in the UK is already a reality. A room full of people already producing local TV and enthusiastic about local content confirmed this at the Westminster Media Forum's [event on local TV](#). The question was therefore not whether or not the UK should have local TV, but how should it get delivered.

Though there was a significant support for the [Government's plans](#) to invest in local TV, Richard Horwood of [Channel 6](#) appeared rather alone in his support for the part of the plan that calls for a single MUX Co. operator to manage the DTT platform for local TV. He argued that a single company would be most efficient given the "messy" nature of the GI system.

Most of the other panellists and a few in the audience, several of whom announced their intentions to apply for the slots on the DTT network, did not want a monopoly MUX Co. handling transmission.

Phil Shepherd, of the [Community Media Association](#), argued that a MUX Co. will not work and that transmission should not be separated from programme. Greg Dyke of the Local Television Network suggested that it would be better to give the BBC money intended to subsidise the MUX Co. network to the local stations and allow them to sort out their own transmission.

Others maintained that local TV should not focus even on DTT transmission, saying it is neither the future nor suited to the medium. The owner of [Helensburgh TV](#) in Scotland stated that 25% of his audience comes to the channel through Facebook and that many viewers watch the content on mobile devices using GSM networks. Simon Walker of [TripleSEE](#) urged people interested in doing local TV to "think next generation", saying it is not about EPG presence, but about searching and recommendations or apps that can identify where you are connect you to local TV content.

One thing that there did seem to be general agreement on was that in the UK local really means local. Following a presentation from Canada's [Channel Zero](#), those making or intending to make local TV in the UK confirmed that they are not interested in local news surrounded by purchased premium national or foreign content. All want to focus on local people, events and issues. Several also pointed out that local TV is also about giving smaller businesses affordable advertising options and Nigel Dacre of [Inclusive Digital](#) said that local TV needs to push the envelope with Ofcom on sponsorship in order to allow local TV to reflect local businesses.

As DCMS digests the responses to its [consultation on local TV](#), it seems there will be much more discussion on how what form it should take and how it should best transmitted to the public. It seems there can be little doubt that there is interest, enthusiasm and capacity to produce local TV content. Perhaps now is the time for more research into whether there is an audience for it and how this audience wants to receive it.

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